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The PACIFIC MONTHLY



A PACIFIC COAST CHRISTMAS

PORTLAND

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The Pacific Monthly

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PORTLAND, OREGON

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Charles Warren Stoddard.

In Old Bohemia

Memories of San Francisco in the Sixties

By Charles Warren Stoddard



IT was Shakespeare night at the infant Bohemian Club, then in its cradle in Sacramento Street, between Kearny and Montgomery.

It was nine of the night and the cosy little rooms—up one flight of stairs—were pretty well filled with the best element of bohemian San Francisco in the sixties.

The club had begun, as all delightful things begin, in a moment of spontaneous enthusiasm, which, of course, was little short of an inspiration. There was sawdust on the floor; there were feet on the table; there were "church wardens" in the mouths of a half-dozen brilliant fellows who knew how to sing a song, or spin a yarn, or write a poem, or paint a picture—some of them had all these talents in their napkins and their napkins were for the most part left untied. There was a keg of beer on tap and if the viands were not up to the standard of the sometimes sumptuous free-lunch counter of that day, there was at least a feast of reason and a flow of soul that still sweetens the memory of the few survivors who must ever look back upon the hour of that nativity with the fond and foolish tenderness of love's young dream.

There was champagne at the christening in the cradle of the club. The infant had developed so lustily that it became necessary to remove a partition and take in an extra room. Though we rejoiced in this annex, we were not vainglorious. It is true that we scorned the mighty dollar and it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Bohemia. That is why we blackballed Mr. W. C. Ralston; it was probably a mistake, for Ralston was one of the best bohemians of his time. He had a big, warm heart; he

was generous to a fault; but he had riches, and for the curse of gold we would none of him. Think not that we were puffed up. The right hand of fellowship tightened in the clasp of many a poverty-stricken embryo genius and the liquidation of a debt not infrequently added an oil sketch or a water-color to our gallery of art, and then followed a general liquefaction at the side-board.

Something of this nature had just taken place when the Sire of the High Jinks called Bohemia to order. It was Harry Edwards, of the California Theatre Stock Company—nearly every member of which finally became a star of the first or second magnitude—who fathered the High Jinks on this occasion. Gentle Harry, whose occasional bursts of indignation at the wrongs that go unrighted in this weary world were the calm delight of his friends, they were so dramatic and so innocuous; he was called Boythorn by those who loved him and knew their Dickens by heart. I can imagine that Walter Savage Lander—with the accent on the middle name—the original of Boythorn, in *Little Dorrit*, and Harry Edwards, of the old California Theatre, when Barret and McCullough ran it up to the top notch in the dramatic history of the Pacific Coast, might have been born under the conjunction of the self-same planets.

Beautiful was Harry's introduction to all that was to follow.

Stephen Leech was there, with a choir almost celestial, and a cycle of Shakespearean songs was faultlessly rendered. Joe Maguire, of the honeyed voice; Signor Morley, of the Italian Opera; Herr Mulder, of the Mulder-Fabri Troupe, and others—a choir invisible are these. Alas! hushed also are most of those whose voices blended with them. Robert C. Rodgers—"Bob," as we

used to call him—and the scholarly James Bowman read essays worthy of the attention of scholars. Later in the evening, after the players were set free, John McCullough joined us and recited with as much impressive dignity and art, and with, perhaps, more real emotion than was his wont on ordinary occasions. J. C. Williamson, who married Maggie Moore and played "Struck Oil" all around the globe—he is now at the head of at least seven theatres in Australia—



To my valued friend Chas. W. Woodard.
With my most affectionate regards,
S. Francisco, Dec 9, 1871. H. Edwards.

Harry Edwards, "of the Old California Theater Stock Company, Nearly Every Member of Which Finally Became a Star of the First or Second Magnitude, Who Fathered the High Jinks on This Occasion."

did Launce, with an imaginary dog, out of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and did it delightfully. Will Mestayer was there and young Eben Plympton, then in the first flush of his eventful career. Plympton was playing juveniles at the California Theatre and playing them with all the ardor of Young Ambition. Old Walter Leaman must not be forgotten; he who retired from the stage and became a staid city official, and wrote a readable autobiography that, I fear, is little

known even by his oldest friends and admirers. Probably John T. Raymond was too busy matching half-dollars to join us on this festive occasion, but at the High Jinks that were held on the evening of the last Saturday of every month the stars of the profession were sure to shine, or at least twinkle, and the annals of the club are enriched with names that are known wherever the English language is read or spoken.

One afternoon, at the old club in Sacramento Street, a few of us sat listening to music rendered by volunteers. Signor Morley had been singing and Charlie Vivian—whose song *Ten Thousand Miles Away* had made him popular in three continents—was entertaining us with a delightful monologue in which he showed surprising versatility. Suddenly Herr Mulder, director of the Mulder-Fabri Opera Company, said: "Give me the titles of three popular songs." We gave him *Dixey*, *Hail Columbia* and *The Last Rose of Summer*. These titles he wrote upon a slip of paper, and placed it upon the music rack of our small upright piano. Then, seating himself at the instrument, he played each of the airs in turn in a manner so masterly that he actually produced an orchestral effect; this was the prelude to an improvisation that followed in which the several songs were disintegrated and hopelessly mingled; recognizable fragments came to the surface as the various components of a salad appear, only to disappear in a moment during the process of making and mixing. Sometimes we were regaled with several familiar bars and these we seized upon, as a drowning man his straw, only to be submerged in a maze of melody where floated the flotsam of the triple theme with which Herr Mulder was toying as the juggler toys with a bottle, an egg and a cannon ball while he keeps them revolving in the air.

For half an hour this extraordinary demonstration of art and ingenuity was continued while our astonishment and enthusiasm was ever increasing. At the conclusion, where the three themes seemed to have been braided, or blended into one harmonious whole, our cheers could have been heard a block away above the city's din. Then Tommy Newcomb, the first president of the club, rushed to the sideboard and seizing a colossal bottle of champagne—it must have held a gallon and had been reserved for the

great occasion that should strike twelve without a shadow of doubt—opened it and the rest of the afternoon was ours and all went merry as a marriage bell. This was Bohemia in its infancy; it was a mighty promising child and no mistake.

Dan O'Connel was with us in those days; a jovial youth who had been instructor in Santa Clara College, but had broken loose and was now browsing in the pleasant pastures of Bohemia. A "broth of a boy" was Dan; proud of the blood of his kinsman, the immortal O'Connel, and as fresh and as fragrant as a shamrock dipped in the "mountain dew" of his own green native isle. He could couple you couplets at a moment's notice or crack you a joke, or play you a practical prank according to your measure. Round and rosy, he was full of sentiment and full of fun, and who has a better right to this mixture than your Irish-born boy?

In 1895 I revisited San Francisco after an absence of a dozen years; the Bohemian Club honored me with a dinner at which Joe Redding, the *Operatitian*, presided. Many a familiar face was absent, many a voice was stilled—O Grave; here is thy victory: O Death! here is thy sting!—but now and again there fell upon my ear something like an echo of the past; it was the bubbling of the blood of old Bohemia beginning to wake from its slumber and rousing from its sleep. Still there hovered over us the spell of utter respectability and the hush of disapproval that held us more or less in check. Joe Redding, upon whose right I was sitting, was called from his chair for a moment and on the instant Dan O'Connel seized it and took the matter into his own hands.

Can you not picture the scene that followed? In five minutes Bohemia had burst its bonds; the spirit that had long lain dormant arose again from the dead and, like the King of Mirth, as indeed he was, Dan's willing subjects made the welkin ring. When Joe returned the field was lost to him and from that hour the cry was "Let joy be unconfined; no sleep till morn," etc., and so it came to pass.

In the good old days when Monterey was the Mecca for artists, poets and bohemians, and Jules Simoneau, the friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, was the prophet thereof, Dan O'Connel for a time made it his headquarters. He has sung of it with a full

heart and it is well that he knew it at its best, for today he could not sing the old song.

One of the adobes on Alvarado Street, which a year ago looked delightfully forlorn, has renewed its youth and is today perhaps the most popular resort in town. The hanging balcony so characteristic of the Spanish-Mexican-Early-Californian architecture has given place to a facade that is a pleasure to the eye and an ornament to the



Eben Plympton, Who Played Juveniles in the California Theater Stock Company, at the Beginning of His Dramatic Career.

ancient capital. It is known as *El Adobe*, and there is not another building of like nature in Monterey but might have been utilized had the right spirit prompted its proprietor and had the architect the taste and skill to preserve the individuality of the past, when this first settlement on the Coast was in its glory.

The billiard and pool room of *El Adobe* is the scene of many an exciting game; and the club room a model in its line. Of course it was like putting "new wine into old bot-

bles," but the scriptural warning, though unheeded, resulted in no disaster and the identity of the adobe is merely idealized. Over the sideboard of *El Adobe* is carved this opening line from Dan O'Connel's beautiful poem, *Monterey*:

"In a mantle of old traditions."

Over the doorway is his chosen motto, handed down from time immemorial and, alas! too little heeded:

"DON'T WORRY."

If you have the *entré* of the artistic home of Charles Rollo Peters, on the hilltop above



Dan O'Connel

"Dan O'Connel Was With Us in Those Days; a Jovial Youth, Who Had Been Instructor in Santa Clara College."

the town, you will remember how that self-same maxim, "Don't Worry," is burned deep into the mantle-tree over the most homelike of hearthstones. This was the achievement of Charlie Dickman, a brother artist, who, in a moment of ardor, made his mark in memory of Dan the Beloved at the expense of one of Rollo Peters's priceless Damascus blades, heated in the glowing coals. Happy hours were they, e'er the hey-day in the blood had grown so tame and humble.

And now I want to go back a little—back to the time when I was a public-schoolboy in

the old white schoolhouse on the west side of Powell Street, between Washington and Jackson Streets. There were long stairs leading up to that school and the building looked not unlike a New England meeting house. Among the pupils were Gus, Charlie and Harry De Young. If I am not mistaken the De Young boys were running a school paper at that time, 1857. Afterward when they started the *Dramatic Chronicle*, a daily that contained the program of nearly every place of amusement in town and was distributed gratuitously, Charlie accepted some of my earliest literary efforts. From that paper grew the *San Francisco Chronicle* of today. Even then it numbered among its paid contributors James F. Bowman, Tremanheer L. Johns, Prentice Mulford and W. A. Kendall, a tall, black-eyed, long-haired poet, who wrote some exquisite verse and then, for unrequited love, blew out his brains in a Sacramento Street lodging-house.

One vignette flashes upon my memory at this moment. It was in the brave days of old when the volunteer fire department was in its glory. The heavy swells ran with the machines that were miracles of beauty, and on state occasions when they swelled the processions, so popular in that day, they were dazzling to the eye. Lillie Hitchcock Coit was the mascot of "Knickerbocker 5" and the pet of the public. The whole town was hers to do what she pleased with and not a man in it but would have gloried in fighting for the honor of her good name. One Fourth of July, when the red-shirted fire-boys were dragging their flower-decked fire engines through the densely crowded streets, there stood upon the tip-top of a floral pyramid a charming youngster clad in the garb of Cupid; not an eye but brightened at the vision, for the impersonation was a great success, and our holidays were worthy of the name in the fifties and sixties. No, it was not the "Lillie of Knickerbocker 5!" It was Master Harry De Young.

There was a small boy at that school who years later became my dear and valued friend. Little did I think then what a life he was to lead. It reads like romance and he, a dashing and picturesque figure to the day of his death, was the very one to lead it. He was a West Pointer, of the corps of engineers; for a time in the Egyptian army; Senior Major Second United States Volun-



James Tracy
John McCullough

"Later in the Evening John McCullough Joined Us and Recited With as Much Dignity and Art, and With, Perhaps, More Real Emotion Than Was His Wont on Ordinary Occasions."



*To Charles Warren Stoddard
from his friend,
Char. de Young.*

Charles de Young, "When They Started the 'Dramatic Chronicle,' Charlie Accepted Some of My Earliest Literary Efforts."

teers, and served through the war with Spain; personally hoisted the first American flag in Havana province; traveled extensively and was a brilliant conversationalist, or, rather, monologist. He had practiced law and I know not how many different offices he held.

When he had reached the years of discretion and lived out more than half his life he was in Washington, D. C., and was so indiscreet as to demand my instant presence. As a solemn professor at the Catholic University of America I was only too willing to doff robe and mortar-board and join him at dinner in his private lodgings. Upon entering the parlor I found the floor strewn with large pages of manuscript. My friend was in his bath, but emerged long enough to crook a bare arm over the top of a screen in the inner room and give me welcome. When he had donned his dressing-gown he seized me in a kind of frenzy and fairly shouted, in a husky voice, "I am writing a book." I suppose Sherlock Holmes would have said as much had he entered the front room with me

Then, in hot haste, he read me a list of titles for short stories he was busy spinning with amazing facility. He had written a half dozen already; he proposed to have enough to fill a book in the course of a week or two—and he had.

These stories, which were originally to have been individual chapters of adventure, began to swarm, and by adding a chapter here and there, as a connecting link, the whole resolved itself into a novel. The man was Colonel Richard Henry Savage. The book *My Official Wife*.

I think I have not anywhere else met with one who wrote with such fluency. Like Anthony Trollop, he could write novels faster than he could publish them. He usually had a page full of titles awaiting their turn to be written up to. He wrote from morning till night and seldom needed to revise anything he had written. He talked as he wrote, in a dramatic vein: the sound of his own voice seemed to inspire a kind of enthusiasm in his brain that kept him up to concert pitch.



"The Scholarly James Bowman, Who Read Es-says Worthy the Attention of Scholars."

In a very few years he published forty volumes—one a collection of poems. Verse-making with him was almost like improvisation. His grave is in the cemetery at West Point, his alma mater, which of all places on earth he loved the best; there his comrades fired the farewell shots above his shrouded remains; and the mournful and mellow notes of the bugle awoke the echoes among the heights above the Hudson with *Taps* that hushed him to his eternal sleep.

A few years later I was a student at Brayton Hall, on Twelfth Street, between Franklin and Harrison Streets, Oakland, California. These were romantic days and from among my schoolmates many rose to eminence in one profession or another. That academy was the very beginning of what is now the University of California at Berkeley. There was one student there, a rotund, fat, good natured lad, who did not impress any of us as being particularly brilliant. I think it must have been his unfailing amiability and the gracious way in which he took a joke at his own expense that made him so companionable.

He had his round of experiences before he found his vocation. Was a civil engineer, a chemist, the superintendent of a mine, and a stockbroker. Then he began to write plays. Heaven knows how long he had been dreaming of dramatic triumphs before he really achieved one. Several of his plays were produced in San Francisco with moderate success. In one of these Clara Morris, then in her prime, appeared, but the play did not long hold the stage.

In 1879 he went to New York resolved to conquer or perish in the attempt. He nearly perished. He wrote a novel and went about hawking it from publisher to publisher, and not one of them would give him the slightest word of encouragement. In New York, Boston and Philadelphia he constantly encountered the marble-heart. Many an author would have abandoned himself to despair, for this case seemed a hopeless one. It was as a last venture that he gave his manuscript into the hands of a New York job printer and published the book himself. Then the



Colonel Richard Henry Savage, "A Dashing and Picturesque Figure to the Day of His Death."

reviewers, with one accord, ignored the book and its author. But reviewers, though they may establish a reputation for an unknown author—usually a fictitious one that is more or less short-lived—cannot always prevent the sale of a tale that is worth reading.

Casual readers began to talk about a new novel with a plot of such stirring interest that one having once begun it could not lay it down till the last page was finished. The reputation of the story was finally begun—thanks to nobody save its readers—and it grew and it grew and it grew, until its circulation finally became one of the most remarkable ever known.

The writer was Archibald Clavering Gunter! The book, *Mr. Barnes of New York!*

I have seen in the streets of London a procession of men with hand-carts, in each of which there were a couple of bushels of pamphlets containing the full text of *Mr. Barnes of New York*, and these were sold for one penny each. On the margin of every page there was a single-line advertisement and this, of course, accounted for the cheapness of the publication, but the cleverness of the story was the cause of its wonderful

popularity. It is said that more than a million of copies of the book have been sold and it has been translated into many languages.

Novel after novel followed *Mr. Barnes of New York* and many of these have been successfully dramatised; but the most popular of Archie Gunter's plays is undoubtedly "Prince Karl," which Richard Mansfield retained in his repertoire to the last.

Archibald Gunter was a royal host. He could afford to be. Sometimes in driving with him through Central Park—his "turn-out" was the gayest of the gay and the jingling of his horses' trappings did not fail to attract the attention of all those present—I have smiled as I thought of the irony of Fate; for the dust of his chariot wheels was powdering the polls of the publishers who with a wave of the hand had unceremoniously dismissed *Mr. Barnes of New York* from their august presence.

He was a very practical worker. His material—the data—was gathered for him by specialists and brought to his study. The *knack* of telling a story that interested the readers from the opening to *Finis* seemed to have become his second nature. We were once talking of this in his study and I expressed some surprise at his happy faculty of at once engaging the reader's attention. He laughed and said, "Oh, that is easy enough! For example," and he immediately began to improvise the opening chapter of a novel; he had not got farther than the first paragraph before my curiosity was excited and I would have gladly listened so long as he cared to continue.

I one day offered him my autograph album, begging that he would write a line in it. He immediately opened it at a blank page and wrote:

Mr. Barnes of New York.

Book I.

The Duel at Ajaccio.

Chapter 1.

Waiting.

"Yes, I rather think this is the exact spot," says Mr. Burton N. Barnes, of New York.

"The spot for what, Signore?"

The spot for me to write my name.

Archibald C. Gunter.

The lines in italics are from the first chapter of the famous novel.

Gunter wrote regularly and in a very businesslike way. He knew exactly what to say

and when and how to say it. He had just completed the closing lines of his final work—I think his twenty-sixth novel—when he suddenly breathed his last.

It has been my good fortune to have been of some slight service to a few who afterward became well-known authors. I think I may say of them all that they have been more successful and have become more popular with the public than I have.

It was in 1870 when Joaquin Miller and I met for the first time, though we had previously corresponded; he had just come down from Oregon on his way to London, where he speedily made name and fame. I was about to sail for Tahiti, where I nearly starved to death in a land of bread fruit and wild bananas. I was sitting on a dock at the foot of Pacific Street, San Francisco, with my old friend, Clay M. Greene, the dramatic author and long the Shepherd of "The Lambs," New York. He was but a boy of twenty and we had strolled to the waterfront together, where I was to await the arrival of a small boat that was to carry me, by appointment, to a French *corvette* of eight guns, where I was to dine with the officers with whom I sailed in a day or two for Papeete.

I said to Clay, as we sat dangling our legs over the edge of the dock, "Why do you not write for the *Golden Era*?" I was contributing weekly to its columns and wanted all my friends to do the same. He protested that he could not, but I felt certain that he could if he would but try; I exacted from him a half-promise that I should see him in print by the time I had returned from the South Seas and, sure enough, that pleasure was mine when I made my escape from Tahiti. He is the author of more than seventy plays, and opera librettos and of the marvelously beautiful Passion Play, "Nazareth," which draws thousands of spectators to Santa Clara College whenever it is presented there.

Another dear friend whom I met in Rome and afterward saw much of in Venice was so clever and delightful a narrator of passing events I begged her to write a story and let me try to place it for her. She laughed me to scorn, but in our frequent cruises in a gondola I pleaded so successfully that she one day told me she thought she would write a sketch. It was her maiden effort and was called *Between Two Fires*. I remember with

what interest, at a family gathering, we listened to the reading of that sketch and how I sent it to the *Overland Monthly*, where it at once appeared and was paid for, and how we all celebrated the arrival of the virgin check.

"Try again!" said I. She wrote a little story called *Their Last Ride*. It appeared very shortly in the *Atlantic Monthly*. I was

a very proud god-father, and gave the young author no rest. "You have appeared in the best magazines on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. Now write a novel!" Not long afterward, while she was on the Nile with her people and Tom Appleton, she sent me word that she thought she had a plot. She certainly had and that story was *Kismet*, published in America in the once popular "No Name Series." In England the story was published by McMillan and called *A Nile Novel* because the title *Kismet* was the English copy-right of another. On the title page appeared the name of "George Fleming," but the

author was Miss Julia Constance Fletcher, of London and Venice. Did ever a man choose a feminine name for a pseudonym, I wonder? *Kismet* was popular from the first and was followed by *Mirage*, *The Head of Medusa*, *Vestigia*, *Andromeda* and several other volumes, with as many plays as well.

One day while lounging in the New York studio of Reginald Bathurst Birch—it was down on that fascinating old Washington Square—a young artist with the aroma of the Latin Quarter still hovering about him,

entered and we were made acquainted. It was Birch who illustrated *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, and several other books by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett. He is a young man of fascinating personality and no one has drawn more charming children than he. We were talking of art-student life in Munich and Paris and were growing jolly and confidential, when Birch was called

Munich and Paris and were growing jolly and confidential, when Birch was called away and my new friend and I were left alone in the studio. Presently he said to me in an off-hand way, "Do you know of any publisher who would be likely to issue a book of mine?"

I asked, "Have you written a book?"

"Yes! three or four of them."

This astonished me because I did not think it was the custom of artists to write book after book unless their name chanced to be F. Hopkinson Smith.

It seems that while an art-student in Paris he had, as a pleasant avocation, been writing stories

and even a novel or two. I at once thought of Archie Gunter, who, having become his own publisher, occasionally issued the work of some other author as a speculation. Mrs. Gunter attended to all the business affairs of the Home Publishing Company; Archie had nothing to do but sit in his study and spin yarns from day to day and keep his presses in action. Gunter did not care to publish the book. I then gave my friend a letter of introduction to a Chicago publisher with whom—to my sorrow, as it



Miss Julia Constance Fletcher—"George Fleming," Author of "*Kismet*," "*Mirage*," etc. As She Appeared at the Beginning of Her Career.

later proved—I had sad dealings. I had been added to his list of victims because Colonel Dick Savage was then publishing with him, and I thought it safe enough to follow in the footsteps of the gallant Dick. It was not long before I received from the author a copy of his first book, entitled *In the Quarter*, a pretty story of Parisian student life in the Latin Quarter, of romantic memory. The volume was dedicated to Reginald Birch; it was the tribute of one fond artist to another. Within the year a second volume followed, a brilliant fantasy, *The King in Yellow*.

Then the Chicago publisher, having been sued by Dick Savage, and I done out of whatever royalties may have been my due, was deserted by the artist-author; but he was not discouraged. During the next three years he published two volumes a year; and ever since he has published at least one volume a year, and sometimes two.

It was soon after we had first met when we met again at Birch's studio. My album chanced to be there and I asked if he would place his name among the autographs of which I was so proud. Birch and I had an engagement and he said he would write while we were absent. Very shortly we returned and I found a charming poem, a good, large page in length, written in my honor. I no longer wondered at his facility, though facility is the gift of few. This young artist-author was Robert W. Chambers, whose prolific pen is the delight of the reading world. He has published his volume of poems, also, and I sometimes wonder if he ever returns to his easel, in memory of the past, or seizes again his pallet and lays on his colors with the en-

thusiasm that drew him to Julien's Academy in Paris more than twenty years ago.

At this moment I am wondering whether fluency is an advantage to a writer. To the journalist and reporter, whose time is limited, it must be. I know that there are fluent writers who write as well, or even better, than many who are drudges. Marion Crawford writes with amazing rapidity and probably alters or erases little—perhaps not at all.

I have lounged in Rudyard Kipling's "Den" at Brattleboro, Vermont—before he deserted America for England—and seen him at his work. He sat at his table in a revolving chair. I had a book in my hand and said nothing unless I was spoken to, for I was enjoying a privilege that was granted no one but his wife. He would write for a moment, perhaps for ten or fifteen minutes at a time; if he was writing verse he would hum very softly to himself an air which probably kept the rhythm in his mind. When writing prose he was silent, but often he would lay down his pen, wheel round in his chair and chat awhile. It might be something relating to the subject he was



Mrs. Isabel Strong, Stepdaughter of Stevenson,
"the Sympathetic, Appreciative Amanuenses,"
To Whom He Dictated His Last Works.

treating, or bear no relation to it. Suddenly he would wheel back again and his pen would fairly fly over the paper. He can easily concentrate his thoughts, and as easily descend from cloudland to the commonplaces of the day, though in his mind and on his lips nothing is ever commonplace. Some of his poems he has written when speeding in a Pullman car at the rate of sixty miles an hour.

Robert Louis Stevenson has told in one of his essays how he set himself the task of



Very sincerely yours
Rudyard Kipling
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Rudyard Kipling. "He Can Easily Concentrate His Thoughts, and as Easily Descend From Cloudland to the Commonplaces of the Day, Though in His Mind and on His Lips Nothing Is Commonplace."

deliberately forming a literary style. We all know what that style is. It leaves a good taste in the mouth. It is a style to study for its singular ease and elegance, but not a style to try to imitate. It can only be imitated, and no imitation is worth a farthing. Of course the fine frenzy came to him at times—especially when he was communing with friends who sometimes inspired in him a rhapsody—but he seemed ever to have

him as jewels and each had to have its setting as perfect as art could make it. Words gave forth a new and finer meaning when he placed them to suit his taste.

In his later years, because he suffered from scrivener's-cramp, he dictated to the most sympathetic and appreciative of amanuenses, his stepdaughter, Mrs. Isabel Strong, and while delivering his perfectly formed paragraphs—they may have been



Robert Louis Stevenson. "Words Gave Forth a New and Finer Meaning When He Placed Them to Suit His Taste."

himself well in hand and to be self-conscious and self-critical to a degree.

When in his Samoan garden weeding—weeds grew knee-high in a night in Summerland—he was forever framing sentences and those that especially pleased him with their grace or beauty he would jot down on a little slip of paper and reserve for future use. Sometimes, perhaps, it was but a single word, or two or three of them that caught his fancy. These words were as precious to

studied, but never formal—he would work in the pretty phrases he had gathered in his garden and which, themselves, had possibly been cast or recast again and again.

I have sometimes wondered if he ever took pleasure or pride in his own work after it had gone finally into print. Entire self-satisfaction he probably did not take, for he was wondrous to the last and the worker who is self-satisfied not only never progresses, but he does not long hold his own.

The Pacific Monthly

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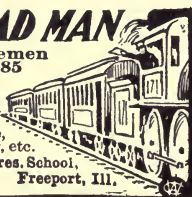
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In Old Bohemia

II. The "Overland" and the Overlanders

By Charles Warren Stoddard



WE WERE in the office of the Secretary of the United States Branch Mint, in San Francisco. It was a cosy office to a certain extent private and confidential.

Bret Harte received his appointment as Secretary through the influence of his great friend and admirer, the Rev. Thomas Starr-King. Clarence King, the geologist who wrote a delightful book called *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevadas*, was chatting with Harte; both were wits of the first water. They were discussing the elder Tom Hood's ingenious poem in which he successfully proves that two lines of a poem are not necessary to complete a rhyme, for the rhymes can be strung on a single one, as for example:

*"Evening has come and from the dark park,
hark!*

The signal of the setting sun, one gun."

The poem runs on in this fashion through many lines. The poet describes a flirtation between a bold soldier boy and a nursemaid with a baby carriage whose restless occupant shortens an interview evidently agreeable to both parties. A sympathetic onlooker, an unoccupied nursemaid, drops a silent tear which, as the poet declares in his last line:

"Shows Rose knows those beaux woes."

Harte thought this a brilliant climax. King laughed him to scorn and added: "That kind of thing is easily done; listen:

"Under the Napa Oaks, folks smokes,"

He continued to improvise in this absurd manner until we were in convulsions.

Bret Harte's humor was delightful. To

Clarence King, who was a geologist and a prose-poet as well as a witty and charming comrade, Harte gave one of his volumes thus inscribed: "To Clarence King, author of *Geology of the Fortieth Parallel* or other works of fiction."

Then Charles Henry Webb came in—he of the decorative impediment in his speech that made puns fairly scintillate when they finally found expression. He was better known to the reading world as "John Paul" of the *New York Times*, and "Inigo" of his own brilliant weekly, *The Californian*, and a paper that in form and feature was the prototype of the San Francisco *Argonaut* of today. Harte wrote for it his "Condensed Novels," "Neighborhoods I Have Moved From," "A Boy's Dog," and many another charming bit of prose, as well as verse. Mark Twain wrote for *The Californian*; so did Ina Coolbrith and Prentice Mulford.

It was in the columns of *The Californian* that Webb kept up a continual fire of witticisms. Ada Isaacs Menken was at Maguire's Opera House playing *Mazeppa* in tights that could hardly have been tighter. Beautiful Menken! She was almost the first actress to follow in the footsteps of our mother Eve as to haberdashery, and the like. Charlie Webb said of her: "She is the best in her line—but it isn't a clothes-line."

In those days Webb and Dan Setchell, the unctious comedian, were chums; it was once agreed that they should tour the country together; Webb was to write humorous lectures and sit in the box office while Dan delivered them to perspiring audiences; nothing came of it, of course; that would have been too much fun for both of them.

When Dan Setchell made his last appearance in San Francisco he played *Captain Cuttle* in a highly successful dramatization of Dickens' *Dombey and Son*. He was to sail for Australia on the following day and

during the scene in which he reads from a newspaper, to Florence Dombey, the pretended loss of the ship on which her lover, Walter Gay, was homeward-bound—this was the captain's clumsy little joke, for Walter was even then in the very next room waiting to surprise Florence—Dan Setchell, with grim humor, substituted the name of the vessel in which he was to embark on the morrow. The joke took well with the audience, but Dan Setchell and the ship he sailed away in were never heard of again.

Charlie Webb went East and invented an adding machine known as "Webb's Adder," one of the first in the market; this brought him more money than all his books and plays and poems and he presently retired to Nantucket, where he bought a fine old red-brick mansion built long before by a retired whaling captain who made a fortune in the Pacific when whales were whales and worth their weight in blubber.

Webb lived the gentle life in that dear home and many an hour I passed there with him and his family. He was monarch of all he surveyed, the observed of all observers, being the one literary lion on the island whose roar was heard beyond the breakers that wreathe it round.

It was Charles Henry Webb who edited and published Mark Twain's first book, *The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, 1867. One day when Webb and I were mousing about in an auction room in Nantucket—you know meat is auctioned off on the pavement in front of the Market, and the Town Crier still shouts the news through the shady streets of the old-fashioned town—we chanced upon a venerable copy of Dr. Watts' *Divine and Moral Songs*. I found the volume by my plate at dinner that evening duly inscribed "With the compliments of the author, C. H. Webb." Joke!

Mark Twain used to join us at Harte's office and many a good story he told there. He had just come down from Virginia City and was writing for the *San Francisco Call*. As he became better known he was constantly quoted and perhaps not always correctly. It was said that owing to circumstances, etc., on his way down to the metropolis, he made so pleasing and flattering an appeal to the mistress of a cabin by the wayside

that she persuaded him to accept her hospitality. He grew eloquent at her table and assured her that some day she might be proud of having entertained him so graciously. It was with difficulty that he prevailed upon her to allow him to depart, for her motherly heart would still nourish him. Finally he consented to make one last request. With delicacy and almost feminine shyness he took from his pocket one of those old-fashioned mother o' pearl shirt-buttons, not half so big as the tip of your little finger, and said. "Since you urge me, I shall be much obliged to you if you will kindly sew a shirt onto that button." I wonder what has become of the modern Aesop who set that fable afloat?

In the Winter of 1873-74, when I was with Mark Twain in London—see *Chapters From My Autobiography*—XVII, by Mark Twain; *North American Review*, May 3, 1907—Mark found the London fog indigestible and six lectures a week at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, a burden. George Dolby—who was Mark's agent and who brought Dickens to the United States and took very good care of him while here, as well as in Great Britain, for they were intimate friends—had Mark very much on his mind. No wonder!

About three o'clock of each afternoon—barring Sunday, which was a day of rest—Mark would begin to dread the approach of eight when he had to face a stolid British audience sitting up to its neck in the fog that had followed it into the hall. Dolby was sure to have some story on his tongue's end with which to cheer Mark, if possible; Mark could always discount him and had one amusing stuttering story that was the delight and despair of Dolby: D—— was a natural stutterer and had a way of saying things in a kind of rag-time fashion. Dolby's crowning ambition was to learn Mark's stuttering story by heart and tell it to his friends with a touch of realism that could only be produced by the introduction of the real article. Alas! he never once got the stutter in the right place.

As soon as Mark found himself before an audience he was absolutely at his ease; so were those who listened to him. Of course there was hand-shaking and albums to be written in after each lecture, but by the time Mark and I, and often Dolby, had re-

turned to the Langham Hotel the lecturer was in his glory, for there was a night and a day between him and his next appearance on the rostrum.

Our rooms were delightful; the fog was shut out of them; a cheerful English fireside is something never to be forgotten and I shall never forget that one. Perhaps just by way of opening the evening's entertainment Mark would go to the piano and, to his own accompaniment, sing in a very rich and musical voice some old negro melody, such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." It was a joy to hear him and I did not have to be paid to listen.

Presently Mark would wander with a careless or unconscious air, over to a table in the large reception room and begin to rearrange certain glasses, spoons, etc., that were always waiting there. A diligent search through London had resulted in the collection of ingredients almost unknown in the England of that day and certainly not generally recognized by the natives of the country.

We gathered by the fireside, he and I—that sounds like the opening line of some half-forgotten melody—a song of good fellowship and the merry days of yore. Mark brought with him two dainty glasses brimming with a delicately-tinted liquid. The glasses were equally divided between us. We drank in silence and were supremely happy for some moments. Then Mark, arousing from a reverie, would turn to me and say in that mellow, slowly-flowing voice of his: "Now you make one, Charlie." With genuine embarrassment I would protest. I used to say: "Mark, you know that I can not make one: I never could. It is not an art that can be acquired. It is a gift, a birthright, and there are not many who are so richly endowed as you. There is no recipe in the wide, wide world that even followed religiously, would come within a thousand miles of that you lately offered me. Even if you were to stand over me with a club and tell me exactly what to do and I did just as you told me, the result would not be worthy of being mentioned in the same day with yours."

Then Mark—persuasively—"O! don't be afraid: I'll stand by you. If at first you don't succeed try, try again. Come now—it's your turn."

With fear and trembling I'd make an effort. Mark's reverie was longer than usual after I had done my best. I watched him furtively out of the corner of my eye, for I loved him and coveted his respect. Presently, as if arousing from a bad dream, he'd spring from his chair and gathering our glasses, murmur, "Your's was so damned bad I'll have to make another one to take the taste out of my mouth." That was a happy thought of his; I needed a disinfectant as much as he did—but the end was not yet. He had hopes of me; he believed that eventually I might become the worthy apostle of a past master like himself. Again and again I'd try, but his verdict was ever the same. When my humiliation began to curdle my blood, and my depression of spirit was such that I could no longer disguise it, he would turn suddenly upon me and say, with unwonted severity: "You're going to sleep!" I could only meekly reply: "Dear Mark, let me go to my bed; you come and sit by me and talk." After this successful compromise, the last I could remember would be his mournful refrain of "Too much bitters! Too much bitters!"

That was a wonderfully interesting experience for me. Every night we talked till cock-crow; I leading him into the paths of the past and he recalling his youth with a charm and a freshness that was positively fascinating. I could have written his life just after our eight weeks together were over. I wish to heaven I had.

I went with Mark and Dolby to Liverpool, for Mark was to embark for home. On our way across England we had a compartment on the train to ourselves and to pass the time away we entered into a spirited contest as to who should soonest produce the best or the worst "Limerick" on record. It was neck and neck for miles and miles and when we had generously applauded one another's efforts we tossed them out of the window and scattered them upon the winds for the gratuitous delectation of the bucolic brotherhood. Where are those "Limericks" now I wonder? One might search the files of *The Ladies Home Journal* for them, in vain.

Mark sailed away, the day following, and Merry England did not seem quite the same to me after that. As for dear old Dolby—he was genial, gentle, generous, and like

many another of his ilk, he died in abject poverty and dejection.

Anton Roman, one of the truest and best friends a man ever had, deserves a statue in Golden Gate Park of San Francisco. It was he who first began selling books through the half-tamed country; who was the first publisher worthy of the name on the whole Pacific Slope; who was the originator and founder of the *Overland Monthly*, the periodical that made name and fame for Bret Harte.

Roman himself has said that he saw an opportunity for the establishment of a magazine that should furnish information for the development of the State of California and all the adjoining territory. He sought financial aid and found it. He secured advertisements enough to give him a good start. It pays to advertise and without the aid of the advertiser most of our popular monthlies would suspend publication.

Roman said: "I looked about me for proper editorial management. The matter had been pretty thoroughly discussed with Noah Brooks, then editor of the *Alta California*, W. C. Bartlett of the *Bulletin*, the Hittells, John and Theodore, John F. Swift, B. P. Avery and Charles Warren Stoddard. Stoddard recommended Francis Bret Harte. I had some objections to Mr. Harte—one was that he would be likely to lean too much toward the purely literary articles, while what I was then aiming at was a magazine that would help the material development of the Coast; likewise, I knew quite well of his ability as a story writer and I would have preferred to reserve his efforts as a contributor. I had my first experience with Mr. Harte when I engaged his supervision as editor of *Outcroppings*, a small volume of selected verse to which he often referred as his first book, 'which contained nothing of his own.' My memory served me better than his, for he actually inserted one of his poems in the little book."

This "little book" of *Outcroppings* so displeased the poets who were not included in it that "May Wentworth"—a contributor to the *Golden Era* and for whom Roman published three or four volumes of fairy stories—came to the rescue and compiled an anthology entitled *The Poetry of the Pacific*, in which, I believe no poet of the period was slighted.

Bret Harte's poem in *Outcroppings* is unsigned. His first book was *The Lost Galileon*. It contained the noble title-poem, read by the Rev. Horatio Stebbins before the University of California on Commencement Day, and was published in 1865. As Harte has said in an introduction to the book: "It contains various contributions to the lyrics of the Civil War then raging, and certain better-known humorous pieces."

Roman knew Harte pretty thoroughly. He knew that Bret was sure to be the bright particular star in the constellation of *Overland* contributors; that he was a painstaking writer who was never quite satisfied with his own work and not always ready when needed; therefore, for three months before the issue of the first number of the *Overland Monthly*—July, 1868—Roman had Harte constantly under his watchful eye. They went together into the Santa Clara Valley and the Santa Cruz Mountains. He says: "Meanwhile I secured for Mr. Harte whatever was within my reach in the way of sketches, tales and incidents in print and picture form—showing the life of miners in the gold diggings during the early pioneer days of California. I still retain duplicates of many of them, though I remember how unwillingly I parted with some of them, of which no duplicates could be secured.

"Furthermore, I used my best efforts to impress upon his mind that the field of story-writing of the early California gold-diggers and their mining camps was yet comparatively new ground and almost entirely open on all sides for him."

Does it not seem that to Anton Roman is due some credit for putting Harte upon a trail which he, alone, was destined to follow with success?

That trail was not a primrose path—primroses have no thorns—and in six brief months a woman proofreader for the *Overland Monthly* sat sternly in the seat of the scornful and refused to soil her hands with the proof of *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. Mrs. Sarah B. Cooper was a religious enthusiast who ran an independent Bible class and was excommunicated by many of her own sect. She was a cousin of Bob Ingersoll. One day, in her parlor, I took a book from her table—it was Ingersoll's *Ghosts*. Turning to the fly-leaf I read this inscription in his hand-writing. "If all Christians were



Charles Henry Webb; "He of the Decorative Impediment in His Speech That Made Puns Fairly Scintillate When They Finally Found Expression."



"The Mistress of This Enchanting Retreat Was Ina Coolbrith, and as She Entered Our Presence, I Heard Joaquin Whisper to Himself: 'Divinely Tall and Most Divinely Fair!'"

like you, this book would never have been written." Yet I am quite sure that Robert G. Ingersoll would never have turned his back on *The Luck of Roaring Camp*.

Harte was fastidious to a degree. He wrote and re-wrote and re-re-wrote and still was not satisfied with what he had written. I have seen him fretting impatiently and pacing up and down the room because he could not find the exact word he wanted to fit into a line of prose. Words were suggested; he only stormed the more and said, "It must be a word of *two* syllables!" No one knew better than

he that perfect prose, though one can not scan it, hath yet a rhythm as fine as verse and far more evasive.

So long as Bret Harte edited the *Overland Monthly* — nearly three years, if I am not mistaken — I contributed in prose or verse to every number of the magazine — occasionally both prose and verse. I was then just beginning to write prose; I had to learn how to write it as one learns how to walk; I could not have studied under a better master. He was an exacting and relentless critic, but he knew whereof he spoke. He was but little older than I, yet I looked

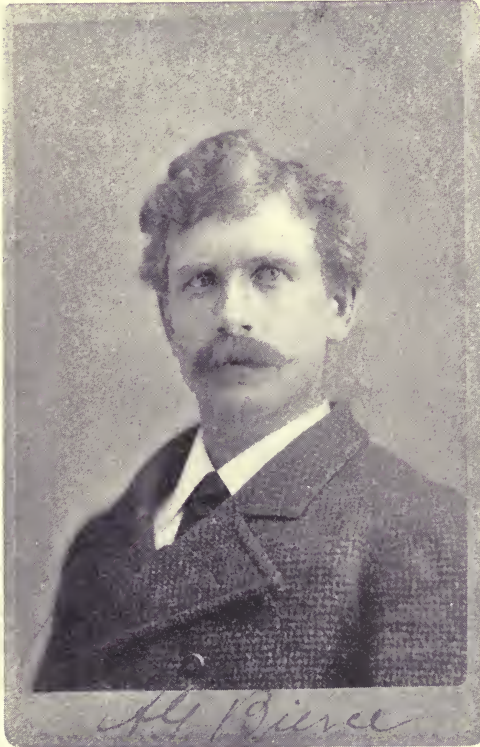


"Mrs. Sarah B. Cooper Was a Religious Enthusiast Who Ran an Independent Bible Class of Her Own."

417 Mont. St., San Francisco.

up to him and always, though perhaps sometimes almost unwillingly, accepted his judgment as final and just.

One phase in Harte's character I could never quite understand. I was far more boyish than he. I had many friends who made much of me and was easily beguiled by them. Harte knew this and used to say to me: "Why do you waste your time among these people? They encourage you in idleness when you should be hard at



Ambrose Bierce, From a Photograph
Taken in 1870.

work. Leave them alone and strive to do something better than you have yet done." I suppose it was this deep, personal interest he seemed to take in me that encouraged me in the composition of my *South Sea Idyls*; indeed it was he who first suggested that I write those very *Idyls*; yet when he deserted the *Overland Monthly* and California, for Boston and the *Atlantic Monthly*—lured by a bonus of \$10,000 a year—he did the very thing he had warned me against doing and neglected his pen for the flesh-pots of Cambridge and Beacon Hill. James R. Osgood, the pub-

lisher of the *Atlantic Monthly*, told me that never in his business career had he gotten so little out of a contributor, or with such pains.

Before he left California forever—I never saw him more—he one day wrote in my Album this quaint and pleasing fancy:

MARY'S ALBUM.

Sweet Mary, maid of San Andreas,
Upon her natal day,
Procured an album, double-gilt,
Entitled "The Bouquet."

But what its purpose was beyond
Its name she could not guess,
And so between its gilded leaves
The flowers *he* gave she'd press.

Yet blame her not, poetic youth!
Nor dream too great the wrong:
She knew not Hawthorne's bloom, nor loved
Macaulay-flowers of song.

Her hymn-book was the total sum
Of her poetic lore,
And, having read through Dr. Watts,
She did not ask for Moore.

But when she ope'd her book again
How great was her surprise
To find the leaves on either side
Stained deep with crimson dyes.

And in that rose—his latest gift—
A shapeless form she views;
Its fragrance sped, its beauty fled,
And vanished all its dews.

O, Mary, maid of San Andreas!
Too sad was your mistake—
Yet one, methinks, that wiser folk
Are very apt to make.

Who 'twixt these leaves would fix the shapes
That love and truth assume,
And find they keep, like Mary's rose,
The stain and not the bloom.

—Francis Bret Harte.

Many of Harte's old friends felt hurt at his silence after he left for the Eastern states. He seemed to quite ignore California and Californians—with a very few exceptions; though to the last he continued to publish those ideal and idealized sketches of pioneer life on the Pacific Coast. It would seem that if there were any one to whom Harte should feel grateful, it should be An-

ton Roman, who did more than all the rest to launch him on his brilliant literary career. Yet Roman, the most faithful and patient of friends and patrons, wrote of him: "Never can I forget his charming companionship. It was a little more than two years after we had spent three months of delightful pleasure in the Santa Cruz Mountains that we met again in New York City; for several months we lived not far apart, but I could not help noticing that a decided change had

solitary acacia tree, still in its adolescence. One day I answered the doorbell and there stood a tall, slender man, in sombrero and moccasins, and with a long linen duster clothing him like a shroud from head to heel. "I knew you lived here," said the fantastic stranger; "Poets always seek the shelter of green boughs and that is the only tree in sight." This was Cincinnatus Heine Miller, just ashore from the Oregon steamer; he had sought me out because we had



Minnie Myrtle Miller, 1870; "Just Arrived From Oregon; She Was as Rustic as a Wild Flower."

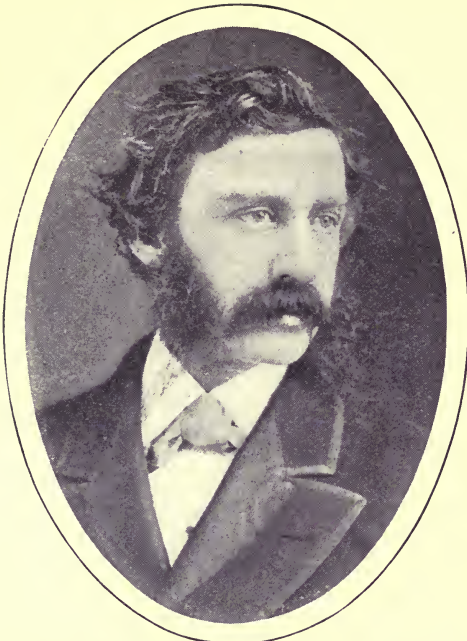
Mrs. Miller in 1872; "With the Aid of a Fashionable Modiste She Made Her Debut in the Lecture Field."

overtaken him—too much of a change for so short a time. I feared then that the success and overwhelming popularity of his stories and poems might have come too suddenly upon him."

In 1870 I was about to set sail for Tahiti, hoping to return to that state of nature in which we are each of us born and which is bounded on all sides by the only "simple life" worth living. I was then at home with my people on Powell Street, next door to the northwest corner of Clay Street, San Francisco. In front of the house stood a

corresponded and he knew no one else in the city. He was hungry; it was between-meals at our house: together we went down Clay Street to a large restaurant below the Plaza; it chanced to be crowded at that hour, but having secured a table in a far corner of the room, he rose to his feet and in a voice that compelled the attention of all present cried: "Waiter, bring me a glass of water and a toothpick." Then we ordered refreshments and began to get acquainted.

Cincinnatus Heine Miller—or Joaquin Miller as he is known to the world today—



Bret Harte, as He Appeared in 1870 in San Francisco at the Beginning of His Fame.

was a fascinating delegate from the Northland. He was on his way to England in search of fame and fortune. He had crossed the plains from Indiana when a youth; had been express messenger, editor, lawyer, judge. He was now to be known as poet, novelist, playwright, lecturer and one of the most romantic and picturesque personalities in modern literature. When he found I was upon the eve of embarking on a South Sea cruise, he, for a moment, thought of joining me. How fortunate it was for him that he did not. Alone and single-handed he achieved success in London. But for the gentle Tahitians, who fed me as the ravens did the Prophet of old, I should have starved to death: yet it paid me in the end, for of that experience the best pages in the *South Sea Idyls* were born.

Joaquin's phenomenal success in London lured his wife, Minnie Myrtle Miller, from her home in Oregon to San Francisco. She was as rustic as a wild flower when she first arrived: seemed like one who had nestled contentedly in the poet's corner of a village newspaper until the sudden fame of her husband had aroused in her a desire to follow in his footsteps. A local manager, with speculation in his eyes, persuaded her to enter the lecture field, then lying fallow, and with the aid of a fashionable modiste she

made her debut in a literary curiosity entitled: "Joaquin Miller: The Poet and the Man." It was not entirely complimentary and by no means a success.

When Joaquin and I had refreshed ourselves at the restaurant, on the occasion of our first meeting, he took my arm and said, naïvely, "Now let us go and see the Poets." There were not many to see in those days and they were not all seeable, but we went to the *Overland* office and found Bret Harte, who had reviewed Joaquin's first bound volume of poems—*Joaquin et al.*,—that had been preceded by a little paper-covered collection of verse called *Specimens*, now exceedingly rare. Harte had referred to the poet as in some measure resembling a war-horse with flames issuing from his nostrils, etc. I think we were none of us entirely at ease; but the ease came later in good measure when we entered a quiet parlor on the east side of Taylor Street, just north of Washington, wherein the prevailing atmosphere was that of a long Summer twilight perfumed with lavender; something of extra charm was added to it by the tinkle of falling water in a marble fountain that graced a garden over the way.

The mistress of this enchanting retreat



Colonel John C. Cremony; "With His Indian Tales That Were Almost Past Belief, and the Two-Edged Broadsword That He Wore in His Boot Leg."

was Ina Donna Coolbrith, and as she entered our presence I heard Joaquin whisper to himself: "Divinely tall and most divinely fair!" This restful room was the resort of Bret Harte, Charles Henry Webb, poor Kendall, who took his own life betimes,

happy—her books, her author's copies, her little gallery of paintings, the gifts of artist friends, her priceless manuscripts and letters from world-famous people, together with every souvenir of the glorious past, were snatched from her by the holocaust of that



Bret Harte, as He Appeared in 1884 After He Had Become a Resident of England.

and others of our literary and artistic coterie. As for me, I was nowhere more at home than there, in the days that are no more. Harte considered Ina Coolbrith "the sweetest note in California literature." Alas all that made her life hopeful and

fatal April that left her, with so many others, desolate among their wind-swept ashes. Another San Francisco may eventually assert itself; but the city that sat like a siren by the sea and might have been the delight and despair of Ulysses himself, is lost to us



*"About Three o'Clock of Each Afternoon, Mark Would Begin to Dread
the Approach of Eight, When He Had to Face a Stolid
British Audience Sitting Up to Its Neck in Fog."*

forever; yea—"Lost forever, and forever
and forever and evermore."

Was there ever such another mystifying
mystery as Colonel John C. Cremony, with
his Indian tales that were almost past be-
lief; and the two-edged broadsword that he

wore in his boot-leg—a very positive fact.
Some of us used to think that he had been
with Byron in Greece; certainly the mantle
of that noble lord had fallen upon him, but
the sombrero was the sombrero of the sun-
set land. When shall we forget, at the Bo-



Prentice Mulford; "I Loaf and Enjoy My Soul."

hemian Club, his invariable toast: "May the Lord love us and not call for us too soon." But the Lord called him all too soon for us.

An admirable and ever-welcome element in the make-up of the *Overland Monthly* was the "Army Post Sketches," by Josephine

Clifford McCrackin: these appeared in a volume, 1877, entitled, *Overland Tales*, and were followed in 1893 by a second volume called *Another Juanita*. No one knows army life better than she: no one loves it more sincerely. Of noble birth, she carried with her into the wilderness and to

the very outskirts of civilization that inimitable atmosphere of dignity and refinement—the criterion of high breeding—that preserves an air of chivalry in the regiments of modern knighthood. Her pen is still active and her brain as fertile as ever. Mrs. McCrackin's library, letters, papers, manuscripts, etc., were destroyed by a forest fire

in her age, obliged to peddle cosmetics from door to door, that she might earn her daily bread.

As for Ambrose Bierce, what more need be said than that in prose and verse he has discounted Dean Swift and Alexander Pope at their own game. W. C. Bartlett wrote deliciously of nature, but not half often



"One Day I Answered the Doorbell and There Stood a Tall Slender Man in Sombrero and Moccasins; This Was Cincinnatus Heine Miller, Just Ashore From the Oregon Steamer."

that swept over her beautiful Monte Paraiso ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1899. The flames were finally stayed by pouring upon them rivers of native wine.

Her bosom friend and fellow Overlander, Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor, who published volumes of prose and verse under her own name—to say nothing of her having written several of the volumes of *Bancroft's History of the Pacific Coast*, received so poor a reward for her labors that she was finally,

enough; reread his *Locusts and Wild Honey* and reawaken your hunger and thirst for more.

It was over at the old Hotel de France, near the foot of Broadway, Oakland, California—when there were more oaks than Oaklanders in the pastoral village—that I came to know Prentice Mulford intimately. Although he had done nearly everything under the sun, he was as shy as a convent girl. He has said of himself in a unique bit of

autobiography called "The Swamp Angel," "I have seen in these forty-nine years, two years of life as an indifferent sailor on a merchant vessel and whaler. On the latter I was cook, to the misery of all on board who came within the range of my culinary misdeeds. I was twelve years in California, where I dug a little gold and a good deal of dirt. I have taught school, tended bar, kept a grocery, run for the legislature, been a post-officer, peddled a very tough article of beef—on horseback—to the miners on the Tuolumne River bars and gulches, started a hog ranch and failed, served as a special policeman and tax-collector, kept an express office, prospected for silver in the Nevadas and found nothing but snow, scenery and misery; pre-empted no end of land, laid out towns which are laid out yet, run a farm to weeds and fallow land, and lectured and written a good deal for the papers. Before I started out in life, when a boy of fourteen, I had charge of a country hotel which I ran ashore in four years; but it never cost the girls and boys of my youthful era one cent for horse hire out of my stables."

In those early days Prentice Mulford was looked upon as a humorist, pure and simple. He had a deeply serious vein, as all humorists have. His contributions to the *Overland Monthly* were chiefly aphorisms, or brief paragraphs embodying his philosophy of life. He read little, fearing that the thoughts of others might influence his thought; but he meditated much and evolved from his inner consciousness a system of philosophy that has become a religion among his followers, and they are scattered all over the world. His tracts have been gathered into the volumes of *The White Cross Library*.

In 1873, when I was first in London, Mulford and I shared the same chamber at No. 11 Museum Street, Bloomsbury. It had been Joaquin Miller's headquarters and a huge Saratoga trunk that stood in the corner of the room contained nothing but Joaquin's silver-mounted Mexican saddle. He was in Rome and sent for his saddle and when Joaquin, mounted on his spirited charger, coursed the Corso, or pranced on the Pinehian Hill, or bounded over the avenues of the Villa Borghese, he helped to make a Roman holiday.

Mulford went to Paris and wrote me: "I

have three things to say to you—Come to Paris! Come to Paris! Come to Paris! Paris is heaven, London is hell." There I never agreed with him—for me those wondrous capitals were quite the reverse. Some years later, when he was writing his tracts for *The White Cross Library*, he wrote me: "Things are comfortable with me in Boston and grow more so. I have come to the conclusion that a man may have whatever he wants, or rather needs, by setting his mind on it and waiting for it to come. I travel now on that basis and school myself not to worry for the morrow: be as rich as circumstances will allow today. I say to myself that I am a pretty good fellow, and when I've done my best I trust to the Lord to do his best for me. I have learned to crochet, to knit my own undershirts, to play lawn tennis, to sketch a very little and some other things. I would like to tell you 'lots.' Can't you visit me? Should like to see you more than I can tell. Boston is unique and worth a study."

While Mulford was in Paris, 1874, I joined Joaquin Miller in Rome and we did the Carnival together: it was then something worth doing, for Rome had not yet lost her identity and become vulgar and commonplace—the fate of all modernized cities. Joaquin and I had many a good time together. Our knowledge of the Italian tongue was limited—perhaps that was half the fun. One day he and I were breakfasting in the little inner room of the Café Greco, on the via Condotti, the famous resort of artists and bohemians. A waiter had brought Joaquin his coffee and a plate of rolls the size of small cobble-stones and about as toothsome. Joaquin struggled with these in vain and then, turning to George Innis, the great American artist, who sat near us, he asked: "Innis, how do you say *too hard* in Italian?" Innis replied, "*Troppo duro*." With an imperious wave of his hand, Joaquin hailed the waiter and said: "Boy, take these rolls away. They are too *troppo*—damn—*duro* for me!"

Taking all things into consideration it seems to me that, after Bret Harte himself, the two among the initial contributors to the *Overland Monthly* who evidenced the possession of the most original and individual genius, were Joaquin Miller and Prentice Mulford.

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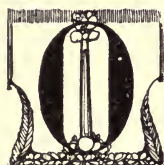


The "Hamadryads." The Message of the Naiad.

Pacific Sept 1878

The Forest Festivals of Bohemia

By Porter Garnett



ON Saturday, June 29, 1878, a hundred men—members of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco, which was then in its infancy—conducted in the woods near Camp Taylor the first Midsummer High Jinks. They were provided with blankets to keep them warm and a generous supply of liquor for the same purpose. The camp was without many comforts, but this lack was made up for by abundance of Bohemian spirit, the factors of which are wit, intellect, taste, conviviality, self-indulgence and the joy of life.

From this small beginning has been evolved, in the course of twenty-nine years, the imposing ceremony that now takes place under the auspices of the club among the redwoods near Guerneville, on the Russian River. The Bohemians own their own grove of two hundred and forty acres, and hold their encampments therein for a fortnight in the late Summer or early Autumn of each year, and the fame of these festivals has spread to the utmost ends of the earth.

On the last Saturday night of the fortnight the performance of the High Jinks is witnessed by over four hundred spectators, all of whom, except a few invited guests, are members of the club. The organization and equipment of the festival has assumed colossal proportions and involves an expense of many thousands of dollars and no end of labor in the details of administration.

The grove itself is a beautiful spot and singularly well adapted for the purposes to which it is dedicated. It lies at the meeting point of two cañons, and is surrounded on all sides by abrupt hills covered with a dense growth of shrubbery—live-oak, laurel, fern, and an abundance of such wild flowers as oxalis, yerba buena and mountain lilies. From this mass of foliage rise the great shafts of redwoods to a height of from two to four hundred feet. Many of the largest and tallest of these trees spring from the

level floor of the grove and have been so arranged by Nature as to form a series of circular glades. In one of these are the dining tables, disposed in concentric circles, and here on the night of the Jinks over four hundred members sit down to a repast as good in point of menu and service as they enjoy in their city club-house.

In a clump of redwoods near the circle is an open-air studio where the artists, who volunteer their services for the encampment, produce a variety of cartoons and posters—usually in distemper—with which the camp is decorated. Many of these are caricatures and are used by members as personal signs and exposed at their lodgings.

The stage whereon is enacted the play, the grove's most distinctive and most important feature, is situated at the foot of a wooded hillside and is framed by the trunks of enormous trees that form a natural proscenium. In the auditorium are placed rows of logs which serve for seats, and just in front of the stage is the orchestra-pit, large enough to accommodate the fifty musicians employed for the production. The hill rises abruptly from the back of the stage, and on it are a series of platforms, masked by foliage, on which parts of the action take place. A rugged trail ascends the hill in a zig-zag course to a point over a hundred feet in a straight line from the stage and at an elevation above it of some sixty feet. The hillside is a natural sounding-board, and the acoustics of the place are so good that words spoken in an ordinary tone of voice from the highest point of the trail can be distinctly heard at the back of the auditorium.

It is possible to compass on such a stage effects that cannot be produced in any ordinary theater, and every effort is made to take advantage of the opportunities for spectacular effects which the place affords.

But whatever marvels are wrought on this stage are made doubly marvelous by the



Nat Goodwin Addressing the Bohemians. The Camp Fire Is One of the Most Fascinating Features of the Festivals. It Is Placed in the Center of a Group of Enormous Trees, Where Seats Made of Great Logs Are Arranged. Here Also Are Conducted Impromptu Concerts and Performances Before the Night of the Jinks.

muscles were seen to play, shone in the light that followed him in his descent. Ignoring the trail, he dashed down the declivity, crashing through the underbrush and leaping, at the risk of limb and life, over bramble and brake, over stones, logs and gullies, until, bleeding and breathless, he stood before the chief and delivered his message.

This introduced the naked actor in the Jinks. The next year in "Montezuma," an historical Aztec Jinks, the "perfect youth," as he was led to the sacrificial stone, dashed from him the garlands in which he had been wreathed, shattered his lyre and, tearing his tunic from his shoulders, stood naked before the priests. Many of the chieftains of Montezuma in this scene were likewise naked save for necklaces and girdles of barbaric design.

The awakening of the trees in "The Hamadryads" was perhaps as effective as anything achieved in a Jinks. One by one the great

trees on the stage were seen to glow with a pale green light while the orchestra played the "Illumination Music." Slowly there was seen to issue from the bole of the largest tree, first the hand and arm and gradually the leaf-clad figure of a wood-spirit. Another and another was released. The light grew brighter. Presently the whole hillside was as brilliant as day, and the hamadryads that seemed to spring from the earth came leaping down the trails, their green garments, slashed to resemble foliage, trembling with their every movement.

A notable effect was also made at the end of this Jinks. This was the appearance of Apollo at the highest point on the hill. His body was nude; from his shoulders hung a chlamys of cloth-of-gold; on his head was a crown of flaming rays, and in his hand a golden bow. A hundred feet below, on the stage, Meledon, the Spirit of Care, hurled defiance at heaven. Apollo plucked from his

shining quiver a dart; he twanged his bow and a bolt of light flashed down the hillside, felling Meledon among the hamadryads freed and joyful.

It was "The Man in the Forest" that marked an important step in the evolution of the Bohemian Jinks. Prior to the year of its production it was customary for the "Sire"—a title conferred upon the member having charge of the festival—to devise a plan or framework upon which the Jinks was built. His fellow-members were then invited to assist, which they did by contributing original papers and singing songs, etc. These were woven together as parts of a ceremony performed in costume and with the aid of various spectacular effects. The Gypsy Jinks, the Buddha Jinks (for which a colossal *Dai Butsu*, modeled after the original in Japan, was erected), and the Druid Jinks were of this description. The Faust Jinks was built upon the opera, and for the first time a large orchestra was used.

The change that was made from this

method of construction consisted of the preparation of "The Man in the Forest" by two members of the club only, the one a writer and the other a composer. Since then the libretto of the Jinks has been written entirely by one member—usually a poet—and original music has been composed for each year by one of the musician members.

In the newer form of Jinks the music is in the form of a prelude or overture, solos, choruses, dances, interludes and a finale, the relation between the musical factor and the spoken word being adjusted as in no other form of stage art. The Bohemian Midsummer High Jinks is therefore not an opera, nor a drama, nor yet a music-drama. It is restricted in length as well as by the Aristotelian unities of action, time and place. Ideally and traditionally the malign character of Care is introduced in all Jinks. It stalks through the plot, bringing woe in its train, until vanquished and slain, at last, by the avenging power of Goodness and Right, which is variously personified.



The Cremation of Care.



A Typical Tent. The Occupants of This One Are Porter Garnett, George Sterling and Jack London.

Upon the death of Care, a march is played in the orchestra; sprites appear on the hillside and come down the winding trail bearing torches and a litter covered with a pall. The march merges into the final chorus which is sung while the whole face of the hillside is illuminated with red and green fire. The bearers, upon reaching the stage, take up the body of Care; a band strikes up Chopin's "*Marche Funebre*," and all the participants in the Jinks form into a procession which leaves the stage and wends its way through the grove. The spectators don hooded gowns of red and black and join the cortège, and all proceed to a little valley a few hundred yards distant, where the ceremony of the Cremation of Care takes place. Here the corpse of Care is placed on the funeral pyre; the High Priest of Bohemia ascends a rostrum and delivers the exequial oration; he recalls all the injuries that have been inflicted on Bohemia during the year by the foul and pestilential demon, carking Care, and gives thanks to the gods of Bohemia for her deliverance from his malign influence. Exultingly, Care is consigned to the flames; the pyre is ignited; the band strikes up a quickstep; simultaneously the forest on all sides is lighted with red and green fire; the coffin of Care belches pyrotechnics in a column of flame, and the costumed choristers dance wildly around it with shouts of joy. The return to camp is a rout of laughter and song, while the band plays popular songs and medleys. It is midnight when the throng sits down to a hot supper.

On Sunday morning an orchestra concert is given on the Jinks stage; the various musicians of the club conducting their own compositions, to which are added numbers of a higher order, such as a movement from one of the great symphonies, or an excerpt from a Wagnerian music-drama.

The High Jinks of the Bohemian Club have become historic, even classic. They have carried the name of the club over seas and have made it almost as familiar abroad as the name of the city in which it has its home. The Midsummer ceremonies in the Califor-

nian redwoods have grown so much in scope and dignity that it is thought by many, and with justice, that the name of Jinks, with its frivolous connotations, is no longer appropriate, and some of the members insist upon calling the performance in the grove the "Forest Play." But call them what you will, the productions of the Bohemian Club have an importance that is perhaps not fully appreciated. Their highest claim to distinction, their greatest significance, lies in the fact that their makers are doing a thing that occurs only at long intervals in the progress of art; that is, they are creating a new art form. It may in fact be said that this has not been done since Richard Wagner developed the modern music-drama from the old opera. It has been pointed out in this article wherein the "Forest Play" of the Bohemian Club differs from all other forms of stage art. It is not purely a drama, a masque, a poem, an opera, nor a spectacle, and yet it partakes of all of these, with something added that is essentially its own, and which depends largely upon the peculiar physical conditions under which it is presented.

In this new art form, which is being created, the ideal to be attained is largely a matter of conception. The over-emphasis of the spectacular, the musical or the dramatic elements has a tendency to rob the performances of their distinction, because through such emphasis, they become merely reflections of other art forms, which have their place in the theater rather than in the forest. As in the Greek dramas so in the Bohemian Jinks action has been minimized with the best results. It is by no means eliminated as the foregoing descriptions set forth, but it has been used to the best advantage only in so far as it is necessary to interpret the poem. The ideal "Forest Play" is in reality a poem—poetic in conception as well as in treatment—accompanied by music and interpreted discreetly by action and spectacle. With these qualities it exerts, upon those who sense its spirit, a spell that can be likened to nothing so much as a mysterious, marvelous and unforgettable dream.



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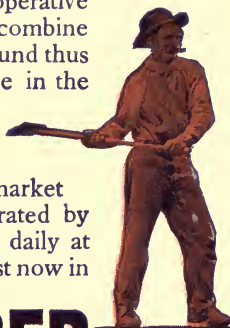
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